



File Code: 1560; 1950
Date: March 3, 2020

Honorable Shannon Wheeler, Chairman
Honorable Mary Jane Miles, Vice Chair
Nez Perce Tribal Executive Committee
NIMIIPUU (Nez Perce Tribe)
PO Box 305
Lapwai, ID 83540-0305

Dear Chairman Wheeler and Vice Chairman Miles,

The Umatilla National Forest would like to know your concerns, questions, and suggestions regarding a project proposal to remove timber, thin small diameter trees, and prescribed burn in the High Buck project area. This Project is located on the Walla Walla Ranger District about 10 air miles northwest of the city of Elgin, Oregon. The planning area encompasses about 11,000 acres of National Forest System lands in the vicinity of Horseshoe Prairie, Ninemile Ridge, and Buck Mountain. The area is accessed by Oregon State Highway 204 and Forest Road 31 (Summit Road).

The Notice of Proposed Action and related documents are available online at <https://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=53033>.

The proposed project is an activity implementing a land management plan and subject to the objection process described in 36 CFR 218 Subparts A and B. In accordance with National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) regulations we will be preparing an environmental assessment to disclose potential resource effects from the proposed action.

The Forest is combining scoping with the legal notice and opportunity to comment on the Proposed Action, as described in 36 CFR §218.24. Your comments during this 30 day comment period will afford you standing to object to the proposed action following release of the Environmental Assessment, Finding of No Significant Impact, and draft Decision Notice. There will be no other designated comment period. If no specific written comments are received during this designated opportunity for comment (§218.5(a)), the project will not be subject to objection.

Specific comments should be within the scope of the proposed action, have a direct relationship to the proposed action, and must include supporting reasons for the responsible official to consider. Specific comments would be most helpful when they highlight cause and effect relationships or refine the action to protect resources or interests while allowing us to be responsive to project goals. Comments offered in support of the proposal are also welcome.

How to Comment



The comment period ends 30 days following the date of publication of the legal notice in the East Oregonian. Submit written comments electronically to <https://cara.ecosystem-management.org/Public/CommentInput?Project=53033>.


Submit hard copy comments by postal mail or hand delivery to: District Ranger, Attn: High Buck Project Comments, Walla Walla Ranger District, 1415 W. Rose St, Walla Walla, WA, 99362. Hand deliveries are accepted between 8:00 AM and 4:30 PM, Monday through Friday, except legal holidays. Submit via FAX to 509-522-6000.

It is the responsibility of persons providing comments to submit them by the close of the comment period. Only those who submit timely and specific written comments will have eligibility to file an objection under §218.8. Individuals and organizations wishing to be eligible to object must meet the information requirements in §218.25(a)(3). Names and contact information submitted with comments will become part of the public record and may be released under the Freedom of Information Act. Persons commenting should include: name, postal address, email (not required, but encouraged), title of project, signature or verification of identity upon request, and specific facts and supporting reasons for the Responsible Official to consider.

The Notice of Proposed Action and supporting documents are also available for review at the Walla Walla Ranger District located in Walla Walla, Washington. For additional information contact Holly Harris, Team Lead, at 1415 W. Rose St., Walla Walla, WA 99362, or at 509-522-6290.

Thank you for your interest and engagement in the management of the Umatilla National Forest.

Sincerely,


MICHAEL L. RASSBACH
District Ranger

Enclosures

Cc:

Aaron Miles Sr, Natural Resource Director
Nakia Williamson, Cultural Resource Director
Neil Thagard, Wildlife Director
Dave Johnson, Fisheries Director
Emmit Taylor Jr., Watershed Habitat Director
Mike Lopez, Staff Attorney

Patrick Baird, Tribal Historic Preservation Officer
Christine Bradbury, USFS Tribal Government Liaison